

Early signs of school problems

Children who experience behavioral or academic problems early in school may be more likely to experience similar problems later on. Children with poor academic performance often require more individual time from teachers, and children who misbehave in school can disrupt the classroom environment for other students. Data on the extent of early behavioral and academic problems in school may help heighten school administrators' awareness of these problems among students with different background characteristics.

- Between 1991 and 1995, the percentage of first- and second-graders aged 6–8 whose parents reported that they had behavioral problems and problems with school work decreased (from 23 to 19 percent and 24 to 20 percent, respectively).
- Black first- and second-graders were more likely than their white and Hispanic peers to have their parents report that they had behavioral problems or problems with school work in 1995.
- The education level of parents was also related to their children's behavioral problems and problems with school work: Parents with a high school diploma or less were generally more likely to report that their children had these problems than parents with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Percentage of first- and second-graders aged 6–8 whose parents reported they had behavioral and/or academic problems in school, by selected characteristics: 1991 and 1995

Selected characteristics	Behavioral problems ¹		Problems with school work ¹		Academically below the middle of the class ²	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	23.1	18.6	24.3	20.3	—	6.4
Grade level						
First grade	23.7	19.1	23.0	18.9	—	5.6
Second grade	22.4	18.2	25.8	21.7	—	7.2
Race/ethnicity						
White	19.2	16.3	20.8	18.5	—	5.5
Black	35.1	31.6	31.4	29.2	—	10.6
Hispanic	29.5	18.4	34.8	21.3	—	6.6
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	32.9	22.9	37.8	35.2	—	12.4
High school diploma or GED	24.7	23.3	25.7	21.3	—	6.9
Some college/vocational/technical	21.0	19.6	24.3	21.4	—	7.0
Bachelor's degree	17.6	10.5	18.6	14.8	—	4.0
Graduate/professional school	19.4	12.9	16.1	11.7	—	2.4

— Data for 1991 are not comparable to data for 1995.

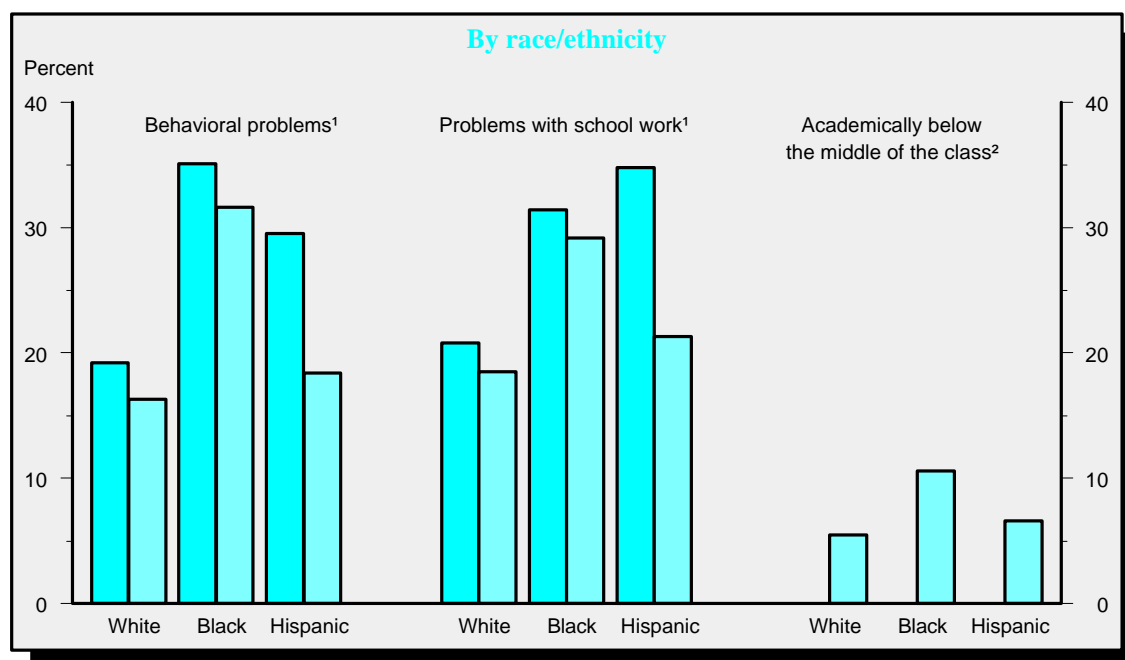
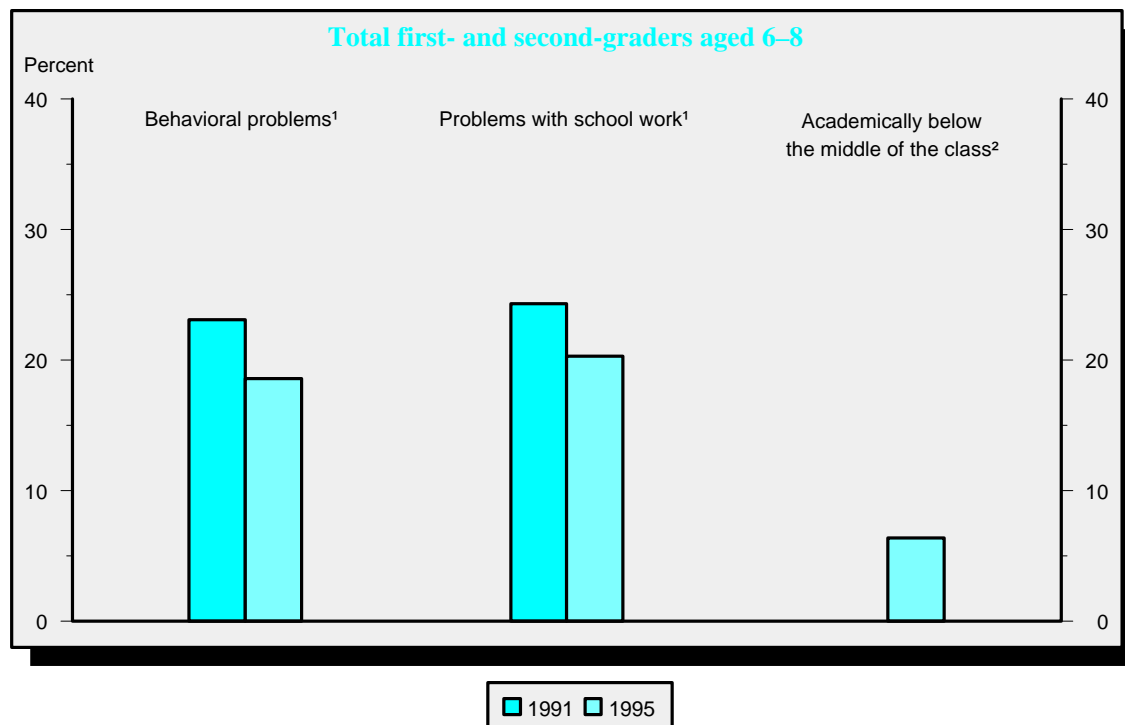
¹ "Behavioral problems" and "problems with school work" represent students whose parents reported that they had been contacted by the school about these types of problems.

² In 1995, parents were asked to rate how well their child was doing compared to other children in the class using the following scale: "near the top of the class," "above the middle of the class," "around the middle," "below the middle," or "near the bottom." Students whose parents answered "below the middle" or "near the bottom" were categorized as "academically below the middle of the class."

NOTE: Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Percentage of first- and second-graders aged 6–8 whose parents reported they had behavioral and/or academic problems in school: 1991 and 1995



¹ "Behavioral problems" and "problems with school work" represent students whose parents reported they had been contacted by the school about these types of problems.

² In 1995, parents were asked to rate how well their child was doing compared to other children in the class using the following scale: "near the top of the class," "above the middle of the class," "around the middle," "below the middle," or "near the bottom." Students whose parents answered "below the middle" or "near the bottom" were categorized as "academically below the middle of the class." Data for 1991 are not comparable to data for 1995 and therefore are not presented in the graph.

NOTE: Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table 3-1 Percentage of first- and second-graders aged 6–8 whose parents reported they had behavioral and/or academic problems in school, by selected characteristics: 1991 and 1995

Selected characteristics	Behavioral problems ¹		Problems with school work ²		Academically below the middle of the class ³	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	23.1	18.6	24.3	20.3	(^d)	6.4
Student's age ³						
Age 6	23.3	19.0	24.0	18.8	(^d)	5.9
Age 7	21.8	18.6	23.8	19.6	(^d)	5.1
Age 8	26.0	17.7	26.4	25.7	(^d)	11.4
Grade level						
First grade	23.7	19.1	23.0	18.9	(^d)	5.6
Second grade	22.4	18.2	25.8	21.7	(^d)	7.2
Race/ethnicity						
White	19.2	16.3	20.8	18.5	(^d)	5.5
Black	35.1	31.6	31.4	29.2	(^d)	10.6
Hispanic	29.5	18.4	34.8	21.3	(^d)	6.6
Urbanicity						
Urbanized area	(^d)	19.2	(^d)	19.9	(^d)	6.0
Not an urbanized area	(^d)	17.3	(^d)	18.0	(^d)	7.4
Rural	(^d)	17.9	(^d)	22.0	(^d)	6.8
Household income						
\$10,000 or less	(^d)	24.1	(^d)	30.5	(^d)	11.0
10,001–20,000	(^d)	24.3	(^d)	26.2	(^d)	9.8
20,001–30,000	(^d)	18.8	(^d)	20.0	(^d)	6.6
30,001–40,000	(^d)	16.5	(^d)	14.4	(^d)	4.3
40,001–50,000	(^d)	16.5	(^d)	18.0	(^d)	3.9
50,001 or more	(^d)	14.3	(^d)	14.9	(^d)	3.7
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	32.9	22.9	37.8	35.2	(^d)	12.4
High school diploma or GED	24.7	23.3	25.7	21.3	(^d)	6.9
Some college/vocational/technical	21.0	19.6	24.3	21.4	(^d)	7.0
Bachelor's degree	17.6	10.5	18.6	14.8	(^d)	4.0
Graduate/professional school	19.4	12.9	16.1	11.7	(^d)	2.4
Family structure						
Two biological or adoptive parents	—	13.0	—	15.9	—	4.4
One biological or adoptive parent	—	25.8	—	26.9	—	9.8
One biological and one step parent	—	33.0	—	25.5	—	9.1
Other relatives	—	34.9	—	37.8	—	12.1

— Not available.

¹ "Behavioral problems" and "problems with school work" represent students whose parents reported they had been contacted by the school about these types of problems.

² In 1995, parents were asked to rate how well their child was doing compared to other children in the class using the following scale: "near the top of the class," "above the middle of the class," "around the middle," "below the middle," or "near the bottom." Students whose parents answered "below the middle" or "near the bottom" were categorized as "academically below the middle of the class."

³ Age was as of December 31, 1990 for 1991 data, and as of December 31, 1994 for 1995 data.

⁴ Urbanicity, family income, and academic standing for 1991 were not comparable to data for 1995.

NOTE: Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table S3 Standard errors for the text table in *Indicator 3*

Selected characteristics	Behavioral problems		Problems with school work		Academically below the middle of the class	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	0.7	0.8	0.6	1.0	—	0.6
Grade level						
First grade	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	—	0.7
Second grade	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.2	—	0.8
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.9	0.8	1.3	1.2	—	0.5
Black	2.2	2.7	2.3	2.4	—	2.4
Hispanic	2.0	1.6	2.3	2.2	—	1.3
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	2.5	3.1	2.7	3.5	—	2.6
High school diploma or GED	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.5	—	1.2
Some college/vocational/technical	1.0	1.6	1.2	1.8	—	1.0
Bachelor's degree	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.1	—	0.9
Graduate/professional school	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.4	—	0.6

— Not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table S3-1 Standard errors for table 3-1

Selected characteristics	Behavioral problems		Problems with school work		Academically below the middle of the class	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	0.7	0.8	0.6	1.0	—	0.6
Student's age						
Age 6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	—	0.8
Age 7	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.3	—	0.7
Age 8	1.4	2.3	1.4	1.7	—	1.5
Grade level						
First grade	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	—	0.7
Second grade	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.2	—	0.8
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.9	0.8	1.3	1.2	—	0.5
Black	2.2	2.7	2.3	2.4	—	2.4
Hispanic	2.0	1.6	2.3	2.2	—	1.3
Urbanicity						
Urbanized area	—	1.0	—	0.9	—	0.7
Not an urbanized area	—	2.1	—	1.9	—	1.5
Rural	—	1.6	—	1.9	—	1.1
Household income						
\$10,000 or less	—	2.5	—	2.9	—	2.3
10,001–20,000	—	2.2	—	2.6	—	1.6
20,001–30,000	—	1.8	—	2.0	—	1.1
30,001–40,000	—	2.0	—	1.6	—	1.1
40,001–50,000	—	2.1	—	2.1	—	1.1
50,001 or more	—	1.1	—	1.2	—	0.8
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	2.5	3.1	2.7	3.5	—	2.6
High school diploma or GED	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.5	—	1.2
Some college/vocational/technical	1.0	1.6	1.2	1.8	—	1.0
Bachelor's degree	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.1	—	0.9
Graduate/professional school	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.4	—	0.6
Family structure						
Two biological or adoptive parents	—	0.7	—	1.0	—	0.6
One biological or adoptive parent	—	1.9	—	2.2	—	1.5
One biological and one step parent	—	3.3	—	3.3	—	2.1
Other relatives	—	6.4	—	6.7	—	5.4

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